



## AMSSA Report

Welcome to the AMSSA Term 3 newsletter and thank you to the schools who have sent in articles and photos. I invite you to send in articles and photos of your Mercy Day celebrations to be included in the final newsletter of 2016.

The Mercy Student Conference is in the final stages of preparation and we are delighted that we will be welcoming students from Mercy schools from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea to Sydney at the end of the month. With the theme of Building Bridges of Mercy, this will be an opportunity for our students to build strong connections with each other.

The AMSSA Executive has now turned its mind to the organisation of our next Mercy Staff Conference which will be held at Our Lady of Mercy College Heidelberg in Melbourne from August 3 – 5 2017. An organising committee has been established chaired by Michelle Cotter from Mercy College, Coburg and including Craig Holmes from Sacred Heart College, Kyneton, Marg Blythman from St Joseph's College, Mildura, the President of AMSSA, Julie Ryan from OLMC Heidelberg and myself.

Our Conference theme is "Sustaining the Spirit of Mercy" – which we trust will capture the ongoing spirit of mercy which has been reimagined and enlivened in us throughout this special Year of Mercy.

Other highlights of the Conference will include our Conference Mass being celebrated in the Chapel of the Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy where Ursula Frayne, the Sister of Mercy who led the first group of Sisters to Perth and then to Melbourne is buried and the Conference Dinner to be held in the Melbourne Town Hall. Please add the dates to your 2017 calendar.

Kitty Guerin  
AMSSA Executive Officer

## OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC COLLEGE BURRANEER

### High Tea

Catherine McCauley loved a good cup of tea, as evidenced when Catherine was dying and she asked her fellow sisters “to be sure to have a comfortable cup of tea for me when I am gone”. Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer in conjunction with De La Salle Cronulla and Caringbah Catholic Colleges have been using this request of Catherine’s as the basis for their High Tea each year which also fundraises for Mercy Works and the La Sallian Foundation.



During Mercy Action Group sessions at the OLMC, the students began organising the High Tea with the help of their teachers and former MAG student representatives. In these sessions students learnt about Mercy Works and how best to fundraise, seek out donations from the local community and volunteer their time in order to best benefit to charity. Both OLMC and De La Salle also contributed by using their food technology skills to bake a variety of slices that would be served on the day.

The High Tea event took place on Saturday the 18th of June at De La Salle Cronulla school hall, and was filled to capacity by 3pm, with 200

plus guests in attendance. As people sat down to their afternoon tea with a variety of sweets and savouries prepared by De La Salle Hospitality students. OLMC and De La Salle Caringbah students attended to their guests, ran a variety of stalls, raffles and learnt what it meant to show mercy to members of their community. The students enjoyed sharing their learnings and passion for social justice during the lead up to the event as well as on the day. A total of over \$7000 was raised for two very worthy causes.

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## OLMC Parramatta celebrates Science Week

The Science laboratories in the Janet Woods Building were abuzz with curiosity and activity as OLMC Parramatta celebrated National Science Week from August 13-21, 2016.

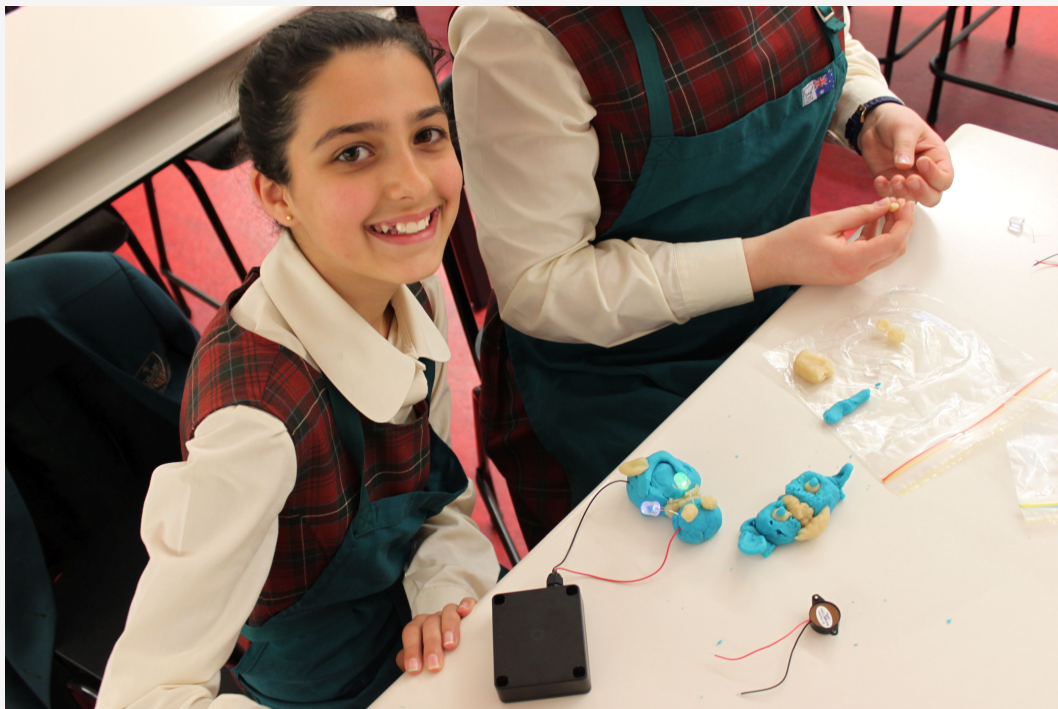


A challenging quiz held during Monday Homeroom kicked off the week and throughout the week Mercy Girls set about rediscovering a love of all things Science by rolling up their sleeves and getting involved in experiments. These ranged from making 'squishy circuits' using conductive play dough, joining in on an open session of the College's



Robotics Cub and trying their hand at a spaghetti and marshmallow building challenge!

Science Leader of Learning Pascale Warnant says celebrating Science Week is important to promote Science as accessible to all and encourage a passion for Science in our students; "In a single sex school environment, like at OLMC, girls get in there and have a go. Whether they are learning about electricity, light or chemistry, girls are encouraged to involve themselves in hands on activities, test things out and learn through problem solving. Whilst many areas of Science are still male dominated, we hope that this will change over the next generation as our students and other girls take up further study in health, Science and other areas of STEM."



National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of all areas of Science and thousands of individuals – from students to scientists, chefs to musicians – get involved, taking part in more than 1500 Science events across the nation. It provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Australian scientists to the world of knowledge. It also aims to encourage an interest in Science pursuits among the general public and to encourage younger people to become fascinated by the world we live in.

OLMC Parramatta STEM Coordinator Felicity Briggs says the week highlights to the community the important role Science plays in many areas of their lives: "According to the Office of the Chief Scientist, it has been estimated that 75% of the fastest growing occupations require STEM skills and knowledge. At OLMC we are committed to working to engage and enthuse our students in this area so they will have the skills and attributes required for the future."

## Wellbeing Week Promotes Positive Mental & Physical Health

Held this year in mid-June, the 2016 Wellbeing Week at OLMC saw students and staff join in a series of events and initiatives aimed at highlighting the importance of taking positive steps to cultivate good mental and physical health.

Inaugurated by the College in 2015, Wellbeing Week has quickly become a favourite week in the school calendar, with the College grounds transformed into a colourful, lively place, abuzz with activity and positivity.



Senior student leaders took the lead, organising a range of activities including the Lunchtime Lip Sync Battle (where teacher groups competed against Year 12 groups), Zumba Classes, Ball Pits (designed to promote conversation between girls from different Year Groups), Handball, a Mario Kart Triathlon, wristbands and a host of craft activities (including making stress balls and mindfulness colouring in).



A free breakfast provided by the Student Representative Council made for a good start to Wellbeing Week. On one day, girls were allowed to wear their 'winter woollies' at school. The aim of this initiative was to remind the College community that by "rugging" up rather than turning on the heater, individuals can support the wellbeing of our world. Students embraced the initiative and hoodies, jumpers and oversized cardigans could be seen throughout the campus.

Girls were asked to bring in a gold coin as part of this initiative and this was donated to Mercy Works. According to Director of Pastoral Care, Anne-Maree Donnelly, the week was clearly a success: "It is so wonderful to see the girls' faces light up when they join in fun activities. They take away from it an important message which will stay with them well beyond their schooling life – the importance of taking deliberate steps to foster and prioritise their own wellbeing."



Staff were not forgotten in this important initiative. Assistant Pastoral Care Leader Kristen Sunner, capably supported by Amanda Farrugia (Assistant Years 11 and 12 Pastoral Leader) and Caroline Rowland (Year 12 Pastoral Leader), arranged pampering sessions as well as special lunches and morning teas, encouraging staff to also heed the message of the importance of looking after themselves.

Deputy Principal Marie Wood says Wellbeing Week is set to continue well into the future: "The College is committed to carrying on the vision of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, and the academic care of girls is central to a Mercy Education."

# ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE ADELAIDE

## Refugee Week

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has called all people of goodwill to “throw open the door of your heart to the word of God,” and urges us to extend the hand of friendship to migrants and refugees who are fleeing persecution.

From June 19-25, St Aloysius College celebrated Refugee Week, recognising the positive contributions made to our school, state and national communities by those who’ve come across the seas.



Led by the Year 7 Justice and Mercy Leaders, students were invited to purchase a cupcake to raise funds for Mercy-affiliated refugee organisations. Giordana Santoro and Emma Hislop 7SS said, “We did the cupcake stalls because we knew that we were raising money for people who are less fortunate than us and it is the least we could do. Also we did it because it was fun and a good way to raise money.”

During the week, attention was brought to the issue of children who come as refugees. The Year 7 students created an outline of a boat in the Mitchell Courtyard and their peers volunteered to draw chalk drawings of themselves inside the boat. Images of ladybirds and butterflies were also included, reminding us of the privilege of freedom and beauty in our environment.

Some primary classes participated in an awareness-raising action called 'Jump up and down', which requires groups of people to skip, hop or jump on the spot for a short period of time. This activity encourages students to appreciate their liberties and consider those living in different circumstances.

We are grateful to all who supported our Refugee Week activities this year and to the staff members who spoke about the campaigns with their students during class or helped us during lunch times.

We would like to say a special thank you to Ms Jo Villis and students in 5JV, who made posters which were displayed in the Undercroft during lunch time on Friday 23 June.

***Ms Maddie Kelly, Ms Sandra Sofia & Year 7 JAM Leaders***

## **STUDENT REFLECTIONS**

During Refugee Week I enjoyed selling cakes and watching the younger primary students draw themselves in a boat. I enjoyed this because I loved raising money for the refugees and watching the younger children have fun at lunchtime and learning about refugees. I got involved with Refugee Week because I wanted to make a difference for people who were trying to find a new beginning in Australia. I wanted to teach lots of people about why we need to help refugees and spread the word of helping refugees.

***Aine Cussen 7JT***





I really enjoyed being able to get the Junior school involved with the activities and help them understand why we are supporting refugees. I thought that all of the activities were very successful and we really made a big difference even though we are only in primary school.

After the workshop that the JAM leaders attended in May we all felt that we could do something and support the organisations that help refugees. We have definitely accomplished what we wanted to and have made such a great contribution to Justice for Refugees SA.

***Abbey Paton 7J S***

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## Walk A Mile In My Boots

What better way to start the day than a casual 7.30am stroll down Hutt Street?

According to more than thirty students and four staff, not much – especially when it's in support of such a worthy organisation as the Hutt Street Centre.

On Friday 5 August, many members of the St Aloysius College Community, including some parents, participated in the Hutt Street Centre's annual fundraising event, 'Walk A Mile In My Boots'.

Several thousand people participate in this event every year, and it is a good opportunity to raise awareness about local homelessness, and also, what is being done within Adelaide to address the issue. Along the way, many students discussed what it means to experience 'homelessness'.

One student observed that it is better for us not to refer to people as 'homeless', but instead, to say that they are 'experiencing homelessness'. This alleviates the assumption that homelessness is a permanent state of living. Some Year 7 students also made this insightful observation: "if we are so cold out here this morning, imagine what it is like to try and sleep safely outside every night."

Our students only walked one mile on a cold morning, but were able to appreciate some of the struggles experienced by people who visit the Hutt Street Centre. Solidarity is a key tool which can be used to develop people's understanding of social issues, and 'Walk A Mile In My Boots' certainly provided an opportunity for our students to empathise and raise awareness.

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## *AMSSA Staff Conference*

**August 8 – 10 2019**

Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney

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